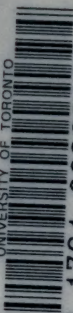


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PARLIAMENT AND DEMOCRACY.

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# PARLIAMENT AND DEMOCRACY

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## CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION .....	v—viii
I.	CONSTITUENCIES .....	1
II.	POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS .....	7
III.	DIRECT CONTROL .....	15
IV.	THE FUNCTIONAL SOCIETY .....	23
V.	A SOVEREIGN STATE .....	31
VI.	THE INDUSTRIAL STATE .....	41
VII.	THE ECONOMIC COUNCIL .....	53
VIII.	TOWARDS DEMOCRACY .....	63



## INTRODUCTION.

I WROTE "Parliament and Revolution" to set out the general attitude which I thought the Independent Labour Party should adopt in the controversy between democracy and dictatorship as the means of establishing the Socialist State, and I wrote frankly confessing that I had no fine-spun theories of academic logic to explain or defend, but that I dealt with what seemed to me to be the difficulties in action which the two policies involved. "When is a revolution not a revolution and a dictatorship not a dictatorship?" this, like similar problems which have recently appeared in political writings and have been discussed with all the nimble evasions of Schoolmen, was, candidly, no concern of mine. So soon as a body of men act upon mere words, they will discover that events pay little regard to verbal distinctions, and finely conceived schemes of things have no substance but the bricks and mortar which the theorists would conceal.

In dealing with the problems which men in action have to face, I indicated that certain changes ought to be made in our representative machinery. At the present time we have two sections in conflict—one declaring for regional representation, and for that alone, and the other for occupational representation, and for that alone: one basing its conception of government upon citizenship and the other upon industrial function. These are really not mutually exclusive, however much their ardent advocates try to make them so. They ought to be assimilated. It

is necessary, however, when discussing how this ought to be done, to discuss at the same time the function of Parliament itself, assign to it its duties, endow it with its accompanying administrative and other bodies, and settle their relationships. Only when we have made up our minds as to the character and modes of working of the institution to which we are electing are we in a position to consider how the electing should be done in order to secure the maximum accuracy of representation. This is seen if we observe the contention of two schools of Parliamentary reformers which have long been active inside the Independent Labour Party. One school asked us to change the method of election and adopt either the Second Ballot or Proportional Representation; only then was Parliament to represent the will of the country and so be entitled to exercise power. Another school drew our attention to defects in the Parliamentary mechanism itself, and promised a vast improvement in the representative machine when Cabinets ceased to exist and affairs of State were settled by committees of members of Parliament. Neither of these proposals touches the question that has now been raised. Parliament has now to withstand an attack of a totally different character. It has to justify its existence. Not the reformer but the destroyer has arisen, and the Socialist movement is challenged to declare whether it believes at all in Parliament as the means by which the Socialist State is to come.

In defending the Parliamentary method and Parliament, one must be careful not to be committed to defend Parliament in its existing form. For that form is constantly changing, and it is



not the same in every country. The real point of attack is this : The Communist argues that there can be no transformation of society until by some decisive act the proletariat have seized the power that enables them to transform. This statement in its general form is a mere truism. But when " the decisive act " visualises an act the success of which depends upon violence and the conception of which is well expressed in the word " dictatorship," the winning of Parliamentary majorities, the tactics of these majorities, the use of Parliament for discussion and of Parliamentary majorities for action, become absolutely futile. Here the Socialists, as opposed to the Communists, take their stand, but in defending Parliamentary methods Socialists must consider from time to time how the institutions themselves can be changed so as to be adapted more and more closely to the needs of representation.

To have discussed the question of representation and Parliament in my former book, though the discussion was necessary for a full survey of the case, would have distracted attention from the immediate purpose of that book, which was to consider the revolutionary and the Parliamentary methods of change and weigh up from the point of view of practical political tactics their respective merits. In this book, the subject is pursued further. Having shown what the method of change should be, I can now turn to consider some important matters relating to the work of representative institutions, their mechanism and their upbuilding.

This examination is necessary for two dominant reasons. Parliamentary methods must be embodied in an efficient organisation if they are to hold the

field against revolutionary methods; reform is not to be found in new electoral systems, in committee government, nor in any of the proposals which can only weaken the power of the Labour Party when it gets a Parliamentary majority. Is the Parliamentary structure adapted to modern social conditions? That is the question which I now propose to answer. If the political method of change is abandoned, is that owing to the antiquated structure of Parliament, or to the *Zeit geist*, or to the frailty of citizens, or to what?

As in "Parliament and Revolution" I did not touch, except in the passing, upon the question of how Parliament was to be constituted, so in this book I am not to discuss the question of method. I assume the Parliamentary method and reject Communism.

During the past century great changes have taken place in our social structure. The social England of 1832 is as different from that of to-day as that was from the social England of the Wars of the Roses. Now, Parliament as we know it is the instrument of government which was adapted to such conditions as those of 1832, and our adherence to Parliamentary methods and democracy necessitates, rather than prevents, such an examination of representative institutions in relation to social structure and to social administration as will enable us to amend and reconstruct, to refit and readapt, and so bring Parliament again into organic touch with national life. Nothing becomes a relic sooner than an institution when it is left alone.







# Parliament and Democracy.

## I.

### CONSTITUENCIES.

**T**HE history of Parliament is a record of the expanding life of the country, the recognition of new interests and classes as the needs, powers and responsibilities of governing spread in widening circles over society, the adaptation of new political expedients to satisfy new political conditions. Nor are we at the end of the process.

Our Parliament, it is important to remember, represented, on its more popular side, communities—shires and boroughs—which were equipped with a machinery of self-government, and which preserved traditions of independent life. In its origins, it represented distinct governing functions. The unit of self-government in Anglo-Saxon times was the Township, the affairs of which were administered by the parish meeting or Moot; this was represented in the Courts of the Hundred or Shire by its reeve and other chosen men, whose function was to answer for the order of their township and for its contribution to the necessary taxation. In time, the shire through its court sent representatives to a national

council to consult about financial matters primarily, and later on the boroughs were asked to do the same. Through many vicissitudes did the House of Commons constitution go, but it was representative of local government organisation—not of electors separately, but of units of administration. Whilst the shires developed a feudal organisation, the boroughs developed a guild one, so that the House of Commons became in time an assembly representing territorial and guild interests. The House of Lords arose from the meeting of those major landholders, military chiefs, and churchmen, whose relation to the Crown was direct, and whose collective function was to share with the Crown in the duty of governing. On the other hand, the original function of the House of Commons was to afford an income to the King other than that given directly by the major Barons and the Church, and it was composed of people who spoke for those units of local government upon which taxation was to be imposed.

The first stage in the evolution of the House of Commons, once it was finally established, was to secure the right to legislate, to control supply, and to determine the power of the Executive. This was done by civil war and revolution. The great struggle in the Civil War was between the rulers who spent money and the local governing bodies who supplied it.\* The latter won; then Parliament in time lost its representative character with the development of industry, and the struggles which ended in the Reform Bill were begun. After the Reform Bill constituencies did not lose a distinctive unity and

\* It is interesting to observe that this same opposition is involved in the conflict between Economic or Industrial and Civil Parliaments, the one representing the producers, and the other the spenders.

personality, and this was particularly true of the more popular ones like the City of London, Yorkshire, Westminster; hardly anyone dreamt of Parliament as the popular will in social policy; it was the national combination of civic units. The first Reform Bill simply changed the communities represented by adding to them the important new industrial communities that had grown up, and taking from them some of the old ones that had decayed. It destroyed the power of the patron, and confined him to the House of Lords. The constituency, however, was not only a geographical one, but an industrial one, and above all a historic one. The 1832 constituency, whatever it was in theory, was in actual fact much more akin to the Soviet, and at the same time more of a self-governing unit expressing its personality through its representation, than the present one. It partook more of the nature of an enfranchised economic class, and yet was a municipality. Since 1832 both the function of Parliament and the nature of the constituency have changed.

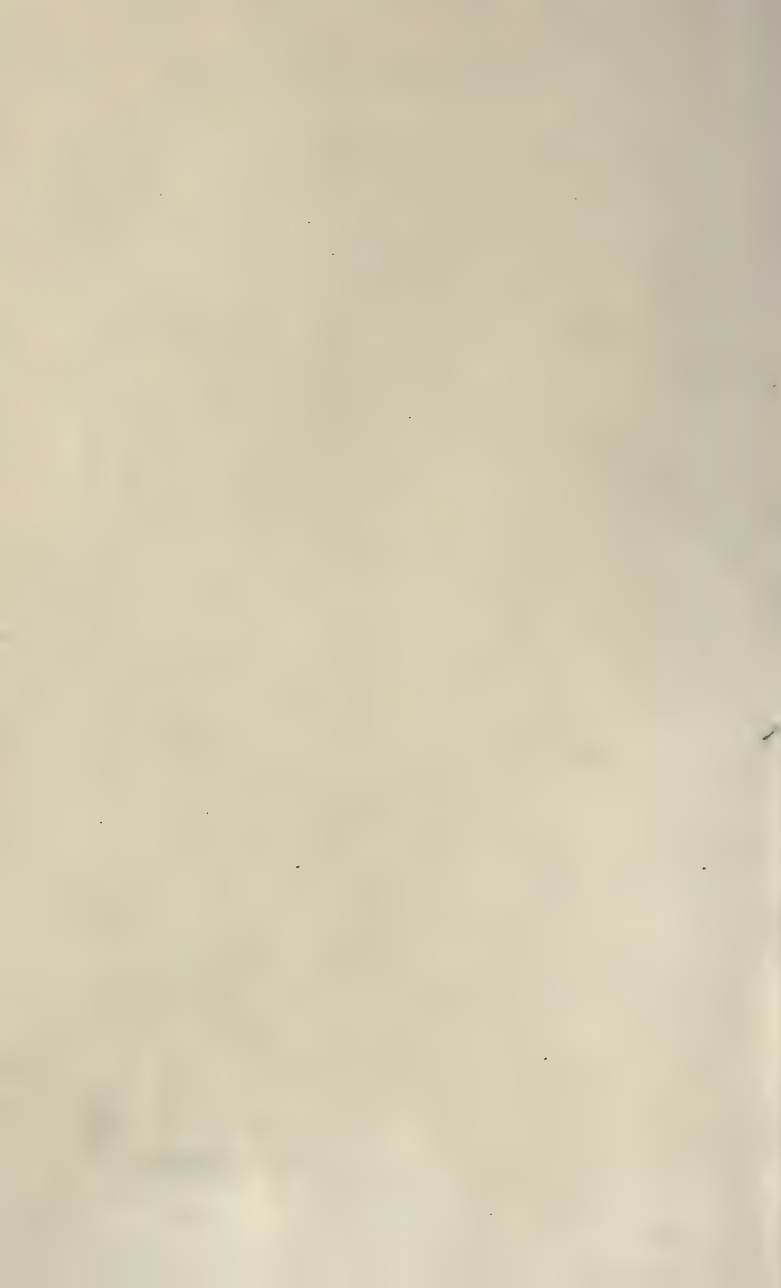
The constituency is no longer a self-governing unit. Shires and boroughs are divided until the group of voters represented is nothing but a certain number of people, at the last distribution a population of 70,000 being regarded as the standard. To get the more or less uniform 70,000, historical tradition is broken, municipal units are cut up, all kinds of interests are stuck together. The constituency has become a purely artificial creation, with no existence in political or social life, except for electoral purposes. The elector does not feel that he is part of a community, that he has to live up to some reputation,

that he must show local patriotism. The electorate has been dissolved into separate individuals. The argument that the community cannot be represented is not true, though it may become true if no regard is paid to communal organisation in fixing constitutions.

Nor does the elector even feel any great class interest. He is an individual in a sea of individuals. If he is associated with a political party, good and well. By associating Trade Unionism as such with itself—and latterly Co-operation—the Labour Party has given a new binding motive to sections of electors. But to the great mass of people in constituencies nowadays political motives have very little connection with political interest. Thus changes in constituencies have tended to disintegrate political interest, and to leave great masses of electors with no guidance, except the gossip, the stunt, or the whim of the moment. The elector belongs to the most primitive and least rational of all associations—a general crowd. In my own experience I have known the psychology of a constituency completely change when, from being a united old municipality, it was divided into three divisions. The change may be subtle, but of its existence there can be no doubt. We had the same thing illustrated during the war, when men recruited from certain districts historically connected with famous regiments were put into other regiments, with a resulting loss of heart and of keenness. They became ordinary common serving soldiers whose only compulsion to do their duty was that if they failed they would be shot. We sacrificed the true constituency of historical reputation and united life to the exigencies of making up a register and the mathematics of one vote one value.



At this point I simply record the change. The enormous extension of the franchise and the creation of constituencies which are merely aggregates of voters made for purposes of convenience, have provided us with a new political mind, and given Parliamentary representation a changed value. The old constituency was determined by the work which Parliament had to do. It was a definite means adapted to a definite end, and when not only has the work of Parliament changed, but the constituency has changed into something quite different from what it was, all I argue for now is that there is a *prima facie* case for an inquiry into this constitutional machinery to see what alterations, if any, are necessary in order that we may get from it what we want. Even had no other influences been at work, what I have just stated would lead us to expect a vagueness about representation, a disorganised vastness, a representative institution founded upon nothing but crowd opinion. The experiences of such a condition of representation naturally provide reasons for those who argue that communal interests are too complicated to be "represented," and that, consequently, geographical constituencies should be abolished. We must, therefore, consider what Parliament ought to represent, and what is its place and relationship in the whole governing and administrative system.



## II.

### POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

**T**HE position to-day is that Parliament represents an individualistic crowd of electors, though that statement must be qualified in two respects. In the first place, parts of the electorate are organised into political parties, and these parties are what are really represented by the various Parliamentary majorities and minorities. Sometimes their programmes touch living issues—issues in which masses of people have a concern; but sometimes they are nothing but organisations existing to oppose each other, run candidates against each other, and form Governments and Oppositions—in other words, they maintain the forms of conflict essential to Parliamentary government, but they are devoid of the differences in substance which give life to the forms. In the next place, the Labour Party has brought a new organisation of electors into the struggle for representation, in so far as it has attached Trade Unions to its allegiance and asks electors to support it through their associations as wage-earners.

The organisation of political parties is sound in so far as they are combinations of people sharing in common large views of State policy and adopting common methods of social change. As time goes on, the Labour Party organisation may be more and more open to objection, particularly if it be found to work in the direction of subordinating social ends

and well-being to sectional ends and well-being. It need not do this, but it is easy to see how it may be perverted into doing so, and we must always keep ourselves free to oppose such a tendency.

It is necessary, however, to consider from the beginning what interests and what intentions ought to be represented in a democracy, where their expression is best found, and what form of organisation can most accurately and spontaneously bring them into action. When this is considered, we find that we must explore the whole function of association, for it is in association that people live, think, and act, and we also find that the higher and wider associations both derive vitality from, and impart their own back again to, special and subordinate groupings. The question we have, therefore, to put to ourselves in order to come to some clear ideas on how to keep the political association of Parliament in living touch with the life of the people is : What are the associations which a human being forms in order to express himself, with what kind of association is the State concerned, and what ought to be the relation of such associations with Parliament and the civic sovereign authority ?

All associations obviously do not concern us. There is a mass of associations of a purely personal kind with which the State, as the political organisation of the nation, has nothing to do. We may, for instance, take the view that it is the business of the State\* to recognise art, and provide from its revenues theatres, opera houses, and picture galleries. But musical associations like choirs, amateur theatrical

\* We must not make the mistake of using the word State to signify only the national political organisation, because it includes the local and municipal ones as well. A Town and County Council is as much part of the State organisation as Parliament.



clubs, and artists' unions, belong to individual activities where the personal will is alone concerned.

The Church has, in time, come to be regarded by many people as belonging to the same category. The character of its citizens is, of course, of great importance to a nation, and the Church has claimed, and some parts of it still claim, that this means that the State must officially recognise a Church. But enlightenment and experience have both rejected the claim. Enlightenment has shown that the secular organisation called a Church is only one, and often by no means the most important, of the agencies for building up civic virtue and character, and experience has shown that baptism or the taking of sacraments has not protected the State against bribery and corruption, or dishonest dealing, or destructive citizenship. Thus when the State comes to decide what is the definition of "the Church" which it ought to recognise, not only is it unable to come to any conclusion, but in attempting to do so it has to leave the field of religion, of faith and of the spirit, and confine its attention to that of theology, sectarianism, and formalism. For instance, in providing for religious instruction in schools, the State only secularises religion, and the Bible and the catechism are at once transformed by a secularising alchemy into the same order of school equipment as a geography and a multiplication table. The religious spirit is an influence suffused through life, not a function that is performed by an organ, even if that organ is called a Church.\*

\* Nothing is more woeful in the schemes of some Guild Socialists than their attempts to embody the function of religion into an organ. We may have an Ecclesiastical Guild, but certainly never a Religious one—except as a purely voluntary association functioning in individual character.

In every community, however well organised, individual liberty will always show itself by the creation of associations of a purely voluntary kind, satisfying a purely individual need, which, though contributing to the social efficiency of the individual, cannot be regarded as organisations of which the State should take cognisance.

Leaving these out of account, what organised unities within the State are of direct State concern?

One is on the border line—the family. This, smallest and perhaps most ancient of all social unities, has been the most permanent in its form and the most pregnant in its effects, both in personality and in communal organisation. Based ideally on personal attraction, obviously any attempt on the part of the State to interfere with it in its formation—like selection of mates—would be defeated, and would only lead to a disastrous system of evasion. But in some of its aspects the State is interested and can neglect it only at its peril. Marriage involves communal consequences which in normal times we are apt to forget, but which the chaotic conditions of war have brought painfully to our notice in these later years. The registration of these unions is a concern of the State, and so are the conditions under which they may be broken—divorce. Greatest of all the State's interests is that the home in which the union exists should be such as will make it contribute most to the happiness and the character of society, and that its income, its share in the national production and wealth, is sufficient to enable it to fulfil its functions. In housing, in the distribution of wealth, and so on, it is the family and not the separate individual that must be taken into account. Society

as a human organisation and as an economic relationship is based not only on the individual but on the family. The society of creches, of public schools, of temporary and whimsical unions, is a society devoid of those personal joys and responsibilities which are most social of all joys and responsibilities, and which in their very nature are of peculiar value in making individuality something which contains social elements and not merely self-regarding ones. Personality in its best form is a social molecule and not an individualist atom; a compound, not a simple element.

Let us therefore begin by assuming the family and see how in society individuals group themselves. First of all a man must get food and shelter, and that means that he must himself produce, receive a share of wealth for his own use, and be able to use the wealth which he receives. Therefore we must think of him first of all as one in a workshop producing, and thereby earning a right to share in the social product, and then as one who goes to a shop counter in a position to make his needs effective for purchasing purposes.

The democratic organisations representing these activities are first of all the Trade Union and then the Co-operative movement. The Trade Union movement, however, is imperfect, as it represents the producer in conflict with the capitalist employer. It is an organ within the capitalist organ in a capitalist State. The final form of the producers' organisation is that which it will assume in the Socialist community, when it will become a truly producers' organisation working directly as an organ of society and superseding the capitalist organ. The

producers will then be united in their various organisations, not to protect themselves against exploitation but to secure the amount of production and to perform the producing services necessary for the life of their community.\*

The Co-operative movement as we know it is also a historic growth of capitalism working in the interest of consumers to protect consumers against capitalist exploitation. Therefore, it has organised not only distribution through stores, but production in factories and on estates, and transport. This is inevitable because the consumer in a capitalist State cannot protect himself by attending to distribution alone. He must also do something to control supply—that is, production. Thus, a Co-operative movement in a capitalist society tends to gather up in itself a control of all the economic processes of social sustenance, and to divide off from the capitalist organisation a complete organisation of its own, self-contained both in its producing and consuming sides. But, just as State capitalism need not be Socialism, neither need consumers' capitalism.

A man, however, has other things to attend to in addition to production and consumption. He has to join in those social institutions brought into existence by an organised community. He lives in a village or a town; he belongs to a national group bound together by a historical and a moral order and entering into relations with other national groups. He has, therefore, to take part in local administration as a member of a local governing authority and has

\* It follows from this that the Trade Union movement may be used as the means of securing capitalism by compromising with it, as has so frequently been the case. Only when the Trade Union movement is inspired by Socialism, and is used as a means (both political and industrial) for bringing about Socialism, does it belong to the forces which are changing the present structure of society.



to pay rates and take an interest in trams, water, public health, education, and such like. He has also to play his part in the cultural life of his neighbourhood. Beyond that, he has to be a citizen of his nation, taking an interest in national policy, taxation, and general social and cultural conditions. In other words, he is the creator of Parliaments and of Governments, and he has also to be a citizen of the world, taking his share in world policy and responsibility.

In performing his duty as a citizen, he will hold certain views as to how this can best be done. He will form political opinions and these will bring him into co-operative contact with others holding substantially the same views. Thus he will belong to another important group, voluntary in its formation and existence, but essential to the performance of his political functions—the group known as a political party.

These are the great political, industrial, and civic functions which a man living in a community has to perform, and these are the associations with which Parliament must keep in touch.



### III.

#### DIRECT CONTROL.

**T**HE question now arises as to how a community can function as a whole? How can the needs of citizens be so co-ordinated that the whole life will proceed harmoniously? How can the life and interests of political associations of a special character be amplified and harmonised into the great association of the civic community?

At this point we meet with the problem of representation. Obviously none of the highly organised and large communities can act through mass meetings. Not only is the crowd too large, but the questions to be submitted are too complicated for such treatment. Some way must be devised by which policy and the effects of policy can be judged by masses, for however specialised the function of government becomes, it must never be allowed to become separated from the mass, which must in the end decide, if not actually and in detail what is to be done, at any rate the general kind of thing that is wanted and the general purpose for which it is wanted.

The expedient of representation has been devised for this, and it runs through the working of all associations. The members of Trade Unions meet in branches; they hold conferences of representatives elected by the members, sometimes on the ground of personal confidence, sometimes on that of agreement with views; they elect executives to conduct their

general business, and to keep a grip over them they provide that there shall be periodic re-elections and that certain matters shall be referred to the whole body of members and decided on a majority vote. In some Unions this reference is made as regards such matters as strikes, levies, working agreements, but the practice varies.

The members of Co-operative Societies meet as a rule every quarter, discuss business statements, dividends, and such matters, elect committees, make grants and transact similar business, keeping the general control of the stores in their own hands.

As regards the political organisations of the municipality and the national State in this country, the masses act only at elections. We have not the constitutional method of reference, though in matters relating to certain municipal affairs, like the extension of boundaries, the undertaking of some new enterprises, the promotion of private Bills and such like, and the sale of intoxicating drink (in Scotland under the Scottish Temperance Act) polls of the local government electors are taken. But nationally, the electors never act in this way. A Parliament once elected is supreme during its constitutional life and on its own responsibility acts in all matters. It may be, and generally is, influenced by manifestations of public opinion outside, but it retains absolute power for the time being.

Two points thus arise in connection with representation. Is it advisable to reserve certain matters for a mass vote, and what ought to be the nature of representation itself? In this chapter I shall deal with the first, and the remainder of the book will be taken up with a discussion of the second.



Theoretically, there can be no doubt about the advantage of mass decisions on matters that in their nature can be settled in that way, but their actual value becomes much diminished when one considers in detail how such a reference can be made. The following propositions indicate some important conclusions regarding the experience we have had of the referendum.

1. *The more complicated the matter referred to the mass, the less is the value of the mass decision.*

When the Swiss were asked in May, 1920, to vote on whether they wished to join the League of Nations, the question put to them appeared to be as simple as that model of simple references put under Local Veto as to whether people wish to reduce the number of public-houses within their area. The answer given by the Swiss people that they did wish to join the League of Nations was surely straightforward enough and could be put into operation without difficulty, so that there appeared to be no secondary considerations to complicate it. And yet the voting showed how complex was the problem which the electors had to solve. Taken at the time it was, the vote raised many of the dying war memories, and the Swiss-German voted one way, as a rule, and the Swiss-French another way. It raised questions regarding the genuineness of the existing League apart from the principles of a League, and so divided the Socialists; it raised questions regarding the international rights of Switzerland—like its neutrality—which depended upon the Covenant upon which this League is based, and so divided Swiss citizens. Therefore, if we may take a Local Veto decision to be a simple one to which the theoretical appropriateness of a reference

to the mass applies in its fulness, the reference to the Swiss on the League of Nations, whilst still appropriate, was attended by more doubts as to the value of the decision on account of the greater complexity of the motives of the people who had to give an answer.

When it is a whole Bill upon which a Yea or a Nay has to be given—a Bill not only embodying principles but details of method which is so referred—the decision is almost valueless. It does not show the popular will; much less does it make it effective. We might, for instance, get a decision in favour of the nationalisation of mines, and yet scheme after scheme for carrying out the decision might be rejected. This has happened over and over again in Switzerland, as, for instance, as regards the nationalisation of railways and of insurance, and has earned for the Referendum the epithet of “one of the greatest fortresses of the reaction.”

The mass can never decide details. These are of the nature of committee points, and a mass can never be a committee. They deal with adaptations and expedients, and with these the mass cannot deal. Committees where adaptations are made must be composed of representatives with plenary powers.

2. *A reference to the mass of matters of the nature of great acts of commitment, e.g., peace or war, must as a rule be only a mere matter of form, and can be of little democratic value.*

Under this a great many things might be included as, for instance, a referendum on peace or war, which, however, can never be put effectively to popular vote. The issues of peace or war would be settled before the referendum could be put. They

depend not upon the will of the mass at some given moment, say the 1st to the 3rd August, 1914. Had a referendum then been taken it would have added nothing to mass power, but would only have cloaked the acts of an oligarchy. The point at which a referendum might have been effective as regards the late war was 1906, when we began military conversations with the French and Belgians which implied military alliances. In August, 1914, it would have been too late. In all these continuous policies of inevitable sequences in situation and event, the reference of the crisis to the people is absurd. Peace and war issues need a continuous vigilance and a control exerted from stage to stage. It may be said, of course, that if peace or war had to be referred to the people, diplomatists would be much more careful in what they did. I doubt the value of this. The men whose policies lead to a crisis do not work deliberately for such an end, and if they believe that certain lines of conduct are right they must also believe that should a crisis come they can get the support of the country. Sir Edward Grey, as he was then, made great play with the fact that he had kept in reserve the right of an independent decision by Parliament. Verbally, he had done so, but he knew perfectly well that he had that decision in his pocket all the time, and had assumed it for years, and had drawn upon it. It may be more difficult to reckon on the support of the people than of a Parliament, and it may put a Minister or a Government in a most awkward fix on the outbreak of war to begin by dividing the nation by vote ; but one lives in a fool's paradise who assumes that the mass which has not controlled policy and not insisted upon a

pacifist one, will vote against war when the crisis comes, or that it can exercise any true right of choice when dashing through the rapids. A man can choose whether or not he will go into the water; but he cannot choose whether he will drown or not when the currents have carried him out to sea.

*3. A reference to the mass is only a part of real control when the circumstances allow a free choice between alternatives.*

I believe that the expedient of reference ought to be introduced into our national affairs, but at the same time its utility is strictly limited to matters of general principle or to simple issues that have not been already prejudged. Amongst the questions of current controversy which might well be dealt with in this way two may be instanced. The first is the nationalisation of the mines and railways, not as a scheme but as a policy, and the other is self-determination for Ireland. A third might be the conscription of wealth.

The practice has its dangers, which ought not to be overlooked. It may be used for purposes of sheer obstruction in Parliament. The Swiss referendum in its fulness of operation is a warning rather than a model. A mass decision may also be taken at a time when the issue is not quite ripe for solution, and, given prematurely, it may be endowed with a finality to which it is not entitled. Whatever may be the faults of Parliament, it is the arena of continuing discussion, and it permits of change more readily than direct government by the mass. Parliament is a body where consultation is possible; the mass is not. Moreover, we are too much inclined to include on very imperfect data that on great issues a majority of the



mass would support a politically active minority in Parliament and a vociferously active propagandist section outside. That may be so, but not on so many occasions as some people imagine.

There is a form of reference to the people known as the recall, upon which some set great store. Here again a certain soundness in theory becomes lost in the practical working of any scheme that can give effect to it. If operated fully it would make the lives of representatives intolerable. In every constituency with a small margin of votes there could be by-election after by-election, and whenever a representative made himself unpopular, even temporarily, this power of the elector could be abused. In Soviet Russia it is undoubtedly used by the Government as a coercive influence against independent representatives. No proposal of which I have ever heard plays more into the manipulating hands of machine politics and puts a greater premium upon dishonest electoral methods than this apparently democratic device.

Moreover, it really misses the point. A representative body is not injured by the independence of a few of its members, unless they affect the balances of power, and then they change the representative character of the body. Moreover, no constituency that has elected a representative who carries out his pledges and upholds the things upon which he obtained his votes has a grievance against him, and should he change and not be honourable enough to resign he may have broken faith with his constituency, but his fault is not of such a kind as to injure the whole community by altering the representative character of the assembly to which he belongs.

The grievance to which the advocates of the recall might address themselves arises when a Government, having obviously forfeited the confidence of the country, uses its Parliamentary power to keep itself alive and impose legislation and policies upon the country with which the majority is at variance. It is not at all unreasonable that there should be some power reserved to the people to declare by vote its lack of confidence in a Government, even if that did not of necessity mean a General Election. In nine cases out of ten it would, but in every case it would result in a change of policy. Towards the end of the last Unionist Administration, and as regards the present one, the power to censure the Government by mass vote would have had a most salutary effect and would have been a real part of communal control.

I am therefore of opinion that in large and complicated modern communities the power of reference to the mass is of very limited utility, though it might be exercised upon certain conditions, and that its most important form is that of a censure upon Governments. The recall should certainly deal with the whole representative organ, and not merely with individual members of it.

#### IV.

### THE FUNCTIONAL SOCIETY.

**T**HE most important problem of all that arises out of representation is : How is the representative body to be kept in touch with the needs of the represented, and how are the represented to be kept interested in their responsibilities? How is the will of the Parliament to be kept identical with the will of the mass? For representation does not only refer to opinion but to action. The representative body must not only agree, it must act.

The Guild Socialist is trying to construct a political scheme in accordance with which society is to be divided into various industrial and social functions, and these functions are to be made the basis of representation. The argument is that I, in society, am a complex of interests, that no one can represent me in my complexity but only in my separate simplicities, and that consequently I, for representative purposes, must divide myself into as many groups, and be represented by as many representatives as I have functions. Moreover, just as I cannot have one representative, so the State cannot have one representative sovereign authority. The political structure which this school would build up has not been officially decided yet, and is being pulled about and frequently readjusted. It is like a machine in the hands of the experimenter. But we can see its general outlines. The overwhelming impression they give is of hopeless confusion and unworkable complexity.

In the conception of government by function there is a simple but deadly error. The process of reasoning is this : Society is a co-ordination of functions and is therefore complicated. Each functional association has a comparatively simple aim ; therefore, as we ought to proceed from the simple to the more complex, we should begin with the representation and the enfranchisement of functions, and thus by building up from the function we shall best attain to the whole society which function serves.

That is not true, and the difficulties in which this school finds itself in building up a structure to suit its theories prove that it is not true.\* On paper, as Mr. Cole says, a function is the specific work which associations were formed to do. But that specific work, say the profession of teaching, by no means produces a simple organisation, with simple objects, which enable any teacher to represent adequately any other teacher ; all specific work is not capable of being performed by associations acting apart or with reference to their own specific function, but can be done only by combinations of functions and associations, sometimes the whole of associations and sometimes only parts or aspects of them. Thus the transport workers cannot manage the transport system alone but only jointly with the representatives of, say, miners (for coal), consumers (for passenger traffic), and so on. A function is not always assignable to one organ or association ; it is often the " specific work " of an organisation of associations, like transport.

These conclusions seem to be sound :

\* *c.f. Social Theory* by G. D. H. Cole, especially the chapter on "The Principles of Function."



1. *The attempt to build up a social structure from specific functions must fail because society is not composed of a mosaic combination of functions but is itself a unity in which the functions find their purpose and utility.*

By analysing the organisation of society, we resolve it into functions, but society itself is not the sum of these functions working alongside of each other. It is the controlling personality, so to speak, which sets the functions in a system and imposes upon them the higher utilities of communal life. Mr. Cole, in his *Social Theory*, begins by defining functional associations as being the creations of individuals, and goes on to admit that they may be anti-social though they should be "social purposes selected and placed in coherent relationship." If these words have any meaning it must be that the control of the function is not within itself but is in the social unity which all the functions serve, e.g., society itself. Begun for purely personal ends (the workman, simply as a workman, works for himself, just as the capitalist, simply as a capitalist, works for himself, and both workman and capitalist in an industrial organisation may work, as they have worked, against the community), at no point in their own special interests can functional organisations become communal organisations and be directed by either communal morality or economics. We all know how easy it is for Trade Unionism, for instance, to become anti-social and, by looking after the immediate interests of its own members, sacrifice a more general well-being. The whole trend of recent progressive thought is to destroy the merely functional spirit of Trade Unionism and make it social.

2. *If it is impossible for anyone to represent the individual in his civic opinions because they are not sufficiently simple and detached one from another, neither are the opinions and wishes of an individual in his functioning organisation single and detached even when that organisation is working alone; much less do we get simplicity when the function is performed by combinations of organisations and functions.*

A social system is not made up of simple functional groups, but of groupings of these groups. That means that the representation in that system has to be indirect and not direct. The engineers', the teachers', the miners' functions operate only in relation to each other and to the whole community. Their work is all of the nature of a derived authority. A printers' guild may run the printing presses, but it is not independent of the papermakers, and it must have some relations not only with publishing but with the guilds of literary producers. Now each of those points of contact widens the activities of the various functions beyond themselves, necessitates co-ordinate functions and destroys the claims that "each function can get on with its own job." Its job is a communal job, and so soon as the functional body concerns itself with its real social business it is more than a mere functional body (as this school of theorists define it), and the representatives who act for it cease to represent anybody but themselves or perhaps the committee that appointed them. The result is that a scheme which is introduced by pointing out that representation is impossible under our present methods ends by creating a system which throws over democratic representation altogether.

The necessity of co-ordinating functions compels the abandonment of the idea that the representatives on the co-ordinations express the wishes of the rank and file. Indirect, undemocratic and non-responsible representation is an inevitable feature of the society which the functionalists visualise.

3. *Although the "functionalists" admit that functions should work for social ends they can provide no co-ordinating social authority.*

The individual who joins the various associations can unite all their functioning in his own will. Functioning, say, in the association of engineers, he is not only an engineer but a citizen, and his actions and thoughts as an engineer are really determined by his intellectual and economic relations to his society. Therefore the engineering functional association is either something that contemplates the whole of society from an engineering point of view, or it contemplates engineering interests only. Here is a dilemma from which there is no escape for Guild Socialists who believe that they have not merely made valuable suggestions regarding industrial administration under nationalisation, but that, in addition, they have discovered a better conception of society and a more scientific organisation of the State itself. If the former is the true view, then the representation of the engineering function is just as difficult ("impossible" the Guild Socialists would say) as the civic constituency, and the functioning group is the microcosm of the whole of society; if the latter view be true, at no point in functional organisation does the whole interest of society appear at all.\* In this conception

\* Obviously the reply to this, that there will be joint meetings of representatives of various functional organisations, is no reply at all.  
1—The representative who goes from various organisations to co-ordinate

of social organisation the engineer can be represented and all the other separate functions which a man performs can be organised, but the whole political unity of the man\* is organised and represented in nothing.

This consideration is important for practical reasons as well. A social system based on functions is a system that is likely to be worked primarily in the interests of functions. In order to make its working even conceivable the most disputable assumptions are made, for instance, that guilds once formed will not develop the same type of conservatism and anti-social policy which their prototypes of the Middle Ages did, and which there is good reason for assuming they will do if they are absolutely self-governing. A workman or a professional man in control of his own function in society *may* develop so much of the social mind that he will involuntarily put himself wholeheartedly at the disposal of society. But that assumption is a very insecure basis upon which to found social structure. Capitalism has so divided society and so disrupted social cohesion that the habit of social service has been sadly weakened. When it grows, it will not demand the absolute self-government of the Guild Socialists, but a just relationship to all other social services.

The whole idea of society as a group of functions is as inadequate as that of the body as a group of organs. The life of the whole is left out. It has no

their work cannot represent any simple aim of a function and so violates the only conditions of representation which the Guild Socialist as politician will accept. 2—The Union of separate functions cannot deal with any wider interest than the sum of the functions represented, and that is much short of all the social interests. For instance, a combination of labour and capital, as in the historical bedstead makers' case, was not a combination which represented a wider social interest than the functional one of the parties.

\* I am not thinking of the whole unity of the man, but only his political unity which is represented to-day in the sovereign political State.



co-ordinating power, and is therefore chaotic and anarchist; it disrupts the social mind and conception; it multiplies infinitely small and ineffective groupings, pretending to be definite in their function but all mere indefinable abstractions; with these vague groupings it must create a special judiciary to settle what they are to be, how authoritative they are to be, and what functions are to be obedient to them; it multiplies enormously the complications of "law" and increases the problems of arbitrators and judges on matters of interpretation and validity, whilst it weakens at the same time the authority of these functionaries. It is bound to create a massive weight and confused entanglement of written constitutions and an enormous army of committee men and bureaucrats, each attached to numerous small functional states within society.

Political social policy must start with the conception of a general unity of which functions are contributing parts, and apart from which function has no meaning. The Guild Socialist, as politician, starts at the other end and arrives nowhere. He not only divides society into two unfusable unities—the political and the industrial—and creates many quasi-sovereign authorities both in national and in local government, but in trying to produce a scheme by which they are to operate he assumes a smoothness of working which all experience warns us cannot be secured, but a lack of which would bring down the flimsy structure like a house of cards.

In this chapter I have dealt only with the political proposals of the Guild Socialist, and my opposition to them must not be taken to indicate an opposition to all that Guild Socialism stands for. The Guild

Socialist has made most valuable contributions to the solution of the problems of Socialist administration, and by virtue of these he has gained a permanent place in the history of the development of Socialist theory and practice.

## V.

### A SOVEREIGN STATE.

**I**F the attempt to build up society from various functions and the State from the representation of various functioning organisations must end in failure because it is conceived in error, what is the positive position of the Independent Labour Party?

Its work is to deal with certain groups of social phenomena. It finds men living in communities with communal minds uniting them to these communities and imparting a unity to all their functions and activities. It finds that man in community has a personality over part of which he remains sovereign, which he never delegates to communal keeping, which he places at the disposal of the community, but in his own way and at his own price. The type of this is conscience. It is not *subject* to Parliaments or functional associations. All that the community can do regarding it is to say that it shall not do certain things which for the time being are intolerable to the general sense or the general interest. Thus, a conscience which demands human sacrifice or a moral saturnalia is properly forbidden to act in a community to which these things are so repulsive that they violate what has become its conscience. Let philosophers spin their theories; in the work-a-day world that is the only tolerable conduct, even if it may impose some injustice and leave individuals with grievances.

But there is another part of personality which belongs to the communal life or which can only be active through communal co-operation. That part must be made subject to common rules imposing common responsibility and obligation (say factory acts, public health laws, criminal laws); or it must be organised into co-operation with others to do more effectively in this way what it would do less effectively, if at all, were it not organised (say the provision of public parks, municipal trams, nationalised coal mines). Some of this necessary co-operation can be done voluntarily (say cricket clubs, slate clubs, mutual insurance), but some of it cannot, and has to be done by the community as a whole exercising authority (say Early Closing Acts). Thus the State arises.

Strictly speaking, the sovereignty of conscience is dependent on some comprehensive conception of moral imperatives, but there is also a limit to State authority imposed by reason. There are certain things—political tyranny, for instance—which people will not tolerate. I am not concerned here with any attempt to define them accurately; they may be classed in what may be called injustice, they may be the more doubtful “violation of individual right.” Whatever they are they are felt to be intolerable, and in the matter of political obedience the categories of the tolerable and the intolerable are real though changeable, and set limits to constitutional authority. Constitutional action is not in the last resort action in accordance with law, but in accordance with the sense of political right and liberty which the constitutional law is supposed to vindicate and protect. Thus a tyrant may use the forms of democracy, but he is a tyrant



all the same; fraud may produce a parliamentary majority but cannot endow that majority with the authority which a parliamentary system is meant to secure. The citizen always holds in reserve a right to rebel, and whether he uses that right or not is purely a matter of expediency. Or, it may be put in this way : State authority belongs to the order of reason, and when it violates that order it invites a challenge.

The State is not the same as the community, but is contained within the community as one of the organisations which are essential to the community. The community is that complex of common interest in which the individual finds a unity, and though it includes groups of varying functions and relationships that do not imply any definite grouping at all, its implications are quite clear. The authority of the State relates only to those activities and interests which concern the political life of the community, and it is limited by the boundaries of a political nation, that is, by a group which has the absolute right of self-government. States may merge themselves in international States with varying amounts of sovereign authority. I may illustrate these definitions and boundaries thus—at any rate as I prefer to use them :

The Irish *community* is very much wider than the Irish nation, and would remain wider if Ireland became a political nation; it is found in England, Scotland, America, Australia—wherever there is an Irishman conscious of the fact that he is distinctively an Irishman and influenced in his mind by it. The Irish *nation* is the collection of Irishmen within the geographical or political limits of Ireland, but at the

moment it lacks that political status which makes it a political nation. The *Irish State* will arise when there is an Irish political nation; at present it is merged in the British State. It may recognise a Church or it may not, but if it does, it is extending itself in a way which history shows may be temporary, because such recognition is not essential to a State but may bring the State into conflict with that part of personality which reserves itself from State control. Ireland in a League of Nations, agreeing to submit to certain decisions of that League, would surrender some of its absolute State sovereignty, and to that extent the League would become an *International State*.

That is the first general survey which the Socialist makes. These are the great fundamental facts of politics—the community, the nation, the State, the reserved personality—and all express and contribute to the perfect existence of humanity.\*

Now let us confine our attention to the State. First of all we note that its boundaries are not fixed by logic or by deductions from “the nature of things,” but by historical conveniences and movements. At one stage in the evolution of human intelligence it was considered to be treason to the State to dissociate it from the Church, at another, it was considered to be a tyrannical use of State authority to interfere between Capital and Labour; at one time it was held to be subversive of communal interest to interfere in trade, at another the very contrary doctrine was held; right throughout history contemporary States have differed both in their modes of government and their characteristic activities, and

\* The Socialist is, of course, an Internationalist, and his final unity is one composed of all these groupings throughout the world. At present, however, I am not discussing International problems. They must be reserved for further treatment.

right throughout the history of political theory—whether we think of Aristotle or Rousseau, Hobbes or Locke—the so-called philosophies of States have been nothing more than attempts to translate actual conditions into dogmas and propositions of universal validity.

The Independent Labour Party begins by taking the great unities of community, nation, and State for granted. It studies functions and functional organisations, but it cannot understand them, and they cannot understand themselves, except in their relation to the whole life of the community which they serve. Thus it cannot hesitate in deciding in favour of a State sovereignty, or in coming to the conclusion that the personality which operates in the community is the citizen, not the industrial personality. The man is bigger than the citizen (defining the citizen as the member of an organised State) because part of personality is reserved and does not come within this external and organised sovereignty; the citizen is bigger than the miner or the engineer, because the State, not only in its boundary but in the scope and nature of its concerns, is bigger than the mine or workshop. Therefore the foundation of the political policy of the Independent Labour Party should be placed not on functions but on the complete civic unity to which functions are only contributory, and upon the citizen, of whom the worker is only a differentiated and specialised aspect. The Independent Labour Party has not considered a man so much in respect to what he does but to what he is; not to his function but to his being.

Thus the Independent Labour Party pursues the truly scientific method. The biologist does not solely

regard the development of cells and tissues in plants and animals as explanations of the types of living unity to which they belong. The life of the whole determines the evolution and the organisation of the function, and when the complete life is feeble, or ill-knit together, abortions and freaks of unbalanced function appear.

The parts and functions of society which are organised into the State are those which concern the existence of the community, the maintenance of proper order within it, and the securing to the individual those personal rights which he might not be able, on account of his personal feebleness perhaps, or of some disadvantages in his position (like economic subordination), to maintain for himself. This involves progressive change, because neither individuals nor organisations stand still. The condition of one generation is presented to the next with the possibility of some apparently desirable change. Therefore the State organisation is not fixed either as to its content or to its form. There is no such thing as an absolute ideal State; there is only such a thing as an ideal citizen. But during the evolution of the ideal citizen there must be a State organisation to secure for the community of individuals a certain order, for weak individuals a certain liberty and protection against wrong, for the whole a certain justice and a certain life of common gain.

Is there any necessity in the nature of things or any practical advantage in dividing this State into two great sections which we may call with a rough accuracy the industrial and the political sections? In the fourth chapter of this book I have already, by way of a critical examination of the functional school



of social theories, supplied a large part of the answer to this question, and I now proceed to complete that answer, which will still be found to be in the negative.

Production is necessary for life in all its aspects and possibilities. Both the individual and the community must command material resources, and production under modern conditions must be organised both as regards the making and the marketing of things. Capitalism is materialist in that it subordinates all other interests to economic ones; it is anarchist because it makes supply and the balance of supply depend upon the unorganised operations of individual interest; it imposes slavery in that it uses Labour for its own ends exclusively and turns it into an irresponsible receiver and carrier-out of orders; it is divisive in that it ranges Labour on one side and Capital on the other and joins them in a contest over their self-regarding interests. This state of things must be ended in the interests of the community. Production must be organised for social ends. Upon this point we must be perfectly firm at the outset. The producer, as such, so soon as production is divided into trades and is specialised and the articles which a family consumes are brought together by an intricate series of exchange and massing together and are no longer made by the family itself, does not necessarily think of social ends and does not think of consumption. He thinks of his own wages, his trade conditions, and such like. Everything which accustoms him to regard himself departmentally or as a part of this function or of that is a barrier to his considering himself in his complete unity as a social being. The producer, as such, is a functionary in a community. For the

moment we can leave out of account what the relation of the producer himself in the management of the organisation of production is to be; I am concerned for the time being with emphasising that the organisation itself is the concern of the community, that if it fails it is the concern of the community, and that therefore the civic organisation of the community must, at any rate as a last resort, retain the power of regulation and control. In other words, the State must retain sovereign authority over the productive organisation. It must remain the authority which co-ordinates the various functions, and as the functions themselves change in their organisation, as they must in response to invention and to new forms of organisation, it must have the power to readjust them. Should ever there be a need to adjust population to the needs of the various departments of production, the State must retain the right of the final word even if it delegates its function to bodies representative of the industrial organisation. Such matters as remuneration and prices are community concerns because they not only affect the relations of all classes of producers and consumers but the domestic and external national relationship as well, and must therefore be regarded as the affairs of the State and not of any group either within or independent of the State.

Suppose all these things are left to the self-will of the various trades or functions, either acting separately or in conjunction, each will settle them in its own interests. The organisation of production will then be nothing but a medley of compromises between interests, with frequent disputes as to the boundary lines between functions. The regulations issued by

each functioning group will have the effect of law which will have to be enforced by some judiciary harassed by insoluble problems as to interpretation, application, and jurisdiction. Such a system may be an advance upon Capitalism, but one of the fundamental fallacies of Capitalism will be embedded in it. The assumption will still be made that the enlightened interest of sections will, in working, mean the good of the whole. Every pioneer of a new school of reforming thought has made that assumption; our experience of every such school in power has falsified it. It must have struck every critical reader of the political proposals of Guild Socialists how frequently when they answer the question: "Will the scheme work"? the reply is that, under it, man being more perfect than he is, or the machinery being more simply just than what now exists, it will, of course, work. So argued the philosophical Radical when he concluded that if men were free to vote they would do so in their own best interest. Whoever at the time pointed out that narrow views and immediate attractions might obscure the best because the appreciation of the best is not at all certain, was condemned as one who did not believe in his fellow men and who lacked decent generosity. The real fact seems to be that whilst men will work far more wholeheartedly in a system which brings them into direct contact with consumers and guarantees that every ounce of effort they put forth is in the common interest than under any other, they will be retarded if at every point the suggestion is made to them that they are in a separate and self-regarding function which contributes to social well-being by looking after itself. The pitfalls

of such a system are so many that if we conclude that it will fail in producing satisfactory social results—just as the mediæval guilds did (though, of course, neither the immediate reason for, nor the forms of, the failure need be the same)—we are far more likely to be right than those who take the opposite view.

So we can now come to the next conclusion and confess to a belief in the sovereign State within the limits appropriate to the State, industrial organisation coming clearly within these limits.



## VI.

### THE INDUSTRIAL STATE.

**A** BELIEF that the political State representative of the full civic life of the community must retain final authority in the organisation of production does not mean, as it is so often taken to mean, the control of industry by politicians or by a civil service bureaucracy.

The Socialist who believes in the State is not necessarily what is technically known as "a State Socialist." Hitherto, I have disagreed with the Guild Socialist, but now I am to find myself in pretty complete agreement with him. When the Guild Socialist tries to construct an organisation of industry on the principle of the direct responsibility of the workers (of course, including the management and the scientific and technical workers) he does great service to Socialism, and his contribution to the problem of how nationalised industry can be administered is invaluable. He has advanced practical Socialism a substantial stage.

The Socialist demand for nationalisation and municipalisation marked a new departure in social thought; bringing that demand within the scope of practical politics marked a new stage in social evolution. At first, however, it was only an operative idea. Naturally, its first form was that of State Socialism, but many who were content to advocate it in that form knew that that could only be provisional. The instinct of the Independent Labour Party was always urging for a more liberal conception

of nationalised administration, and, consequently, the Party hospitably received the ideas and proposals of the Guild Socialists regarding workshop management and the control of industry. These ideas are now sufficiently clear and well defined to enable the Party to state them in accordance with its own position and embody them definitely in its programme.

Nationalised industry is not to be bureaucratically controlled by a Civil Service. The State is to delegate its industrial responsibility to industrial associations just as it delegates its municipal responsibilities to local government bodies. If it be observed that the relations between these local bodies and the central authorities are unsatisfactory and that the liberty of the former is not sufficiently ample, we admit it. A State inspired by the democratic spirit of Socialism would be more liberal, and for a long time the Independent Labour Party has been committed to giving much greater authority to municipal bodies. I am only concerned here with the principle.

Upon an industry becoming nationalised, the State by Act of Parliament and administrative order will at once set up a body of administration with properly defined duties. It will be composed in the main of the workers of all grades concerned, and may constitute itself into workshop, regional and national committees to enable it to do its work. That work will be, in the main, production, and so the body need not be complicated in its composition by the representation of consumers or any other interest, except that the State, when the owner of the industrial capital employed, must be represented in those parts of the general organisation where its interests are involved.

The needs of production are briefly as follows : (1) the supply of raw material; (2) day to day working, including machinery for dealing with disputes and other questions involved in working as they arise; (3) management, promotion, including efficiency working, etc.; (4) scientific and technical investigation in connection with the different processes, and their application when completed.

The first requires an organisation which must vary from trade to trade. In most cases, it is not a matter which affects the labour to be employed upon the raw material, and would have to be dealt with by skilled agents working under directions of a Central Committee of Supply which would be divided into departments, e.g., cotton, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, and so on.

The second is purely a matter for the workers (again, I emphasise *all* grades) employed. A workshop or a mine committee of responsible workers, chosen as shop stewards, foremen, managers, would see to this, and the same committee would consider and formulate demands, carry them out when they concerned the workshop alone or were within their jurisdiction, and bring them to the notice of the proper authorities if they themselves could not deal with them. This would include such questions as wages and hours of labour, both of which obviously concern the whole industry in the first place, but also affect the balance of social exchange and the relation of any one industry to the rest. The workshop would formulate them in the first instance, the trade guild or committee would have to discuss them and give them their final form as a demand, but obviously some higher authority would have to sanction them.

We must observe that this function would have to be performed under two different conditions—the transition State, when only some industries would be socially organised, and the complete Socialist State. Under the latter, wages problems would have completely changed their character and would be concerned with how the national product was to be divided. The product would be amply sufficient to secure men in life and human comfort, and its precise division, provided each gets a satisfactory minimum, would not trouble people. Insecurity alone makes a scramble for income inevitable and the reward of greed useful.

But in the transition State, wages problems will continue to be troublesome and the intelligent wage-earner will seek with more and more keenness to take all pure profit to himself. Thus, the miners are now (June, 1920) refusing to allow the Government to make large profits from the sale of coal to ease the taxpayer, and are asking that part of the surplus should be added to their wages and the rest used for the reduction of prices. In this transition State and, at first, in the nationalised industries, wages might well be paid on a standard minimum (not necessarily the same for all trades and certainly not the same for all grades) with additions based on piece rates. That would be the simplest way for securing to the workers the maximum share in the products of their labour, and at the same time it would reduce the wages problem to the simple one of ascertaining facts as to what is the most equitable way under certain given conditions for dividing the available production. The general question, then, would be : “Is the industry supporting itself” (if it be a



productive one), or: "Is the service receiving its just share of social charges?"

The third need is one in which the workshop should be dealt with by the guild committee of the industry but in which the higher authority of supply has also an interest, and the fourth is in the same position.

Such is the work to be done. What organisation is required to do it? First of all, the question arises as to what the higher authority of supply should be, and how it should be composed. It should be the body which should estimate the complete needs of the community from time to time, present its mandates for production to the various industrial guilds or committees, receive from them their demands for raw material, and satisfy itself that the whole machinery of production was being run. This department should also deal with the organisation of transport (the actual working of transport being managed on the same general plan as production), for transport belongs to the responsibility of supply and not of production. It might also have to deal with the general conditions of industry and apportion to each trade its collective share in the available wealth, though this might well be dealt with by a separate body similarly constituted. From this conspectus of duties, the composition of the body becomes clear. It must be a part of the political State and be subject to Parliamentary control. Its work may be public, and its subordinate staff must belong to the Civil Service. On it, and on all its operative committees, there must be representatives of production—labour, managerial, scientific, and technical. It must be able to create *ad hoc* advisory

committees properly representative in view of the functions they have to perform. In a word, it must be at once the great wholesale of the industrial State, the clearing-house for all requirements that need national consideration, and it should act as the industrial financial agent for the State.

Put in this way, one may gather the impression of great centralisation; as a matter of fact that will not be so. Centralisation we must have, and because of an ignorant and ill-thought-out cry against it we must not be frightened away from it. Bureaucratic it may even seem, but again, as a matter of fact, bureaucratic it is not. We must organise the purely mechanical side of administration so as to make it an efficient machine, but in control of the machine should be free initiative in direct touch with the affairs with which it deals. Bureaucracy divides the machine from its work; Socialist administration puts the life and experience of the work in command of the machine. Also, in order to reap the full benefits of centralisation, it must be run with, and not be exclusive of, a large delegation of power to localities and associations; it must give liberty to the workers and responsibility to their associations. Indeed, it will be to a great extent a watching department asking for results rather than interfering with the getting of them. A healthy body is not conscious of its organs, but it knows at once if they are out of order, and it alone can tell when they are diseased.

The scheme of organisation which grows in one's mind by relating and co-ordinating the various stages in the process of an organised industrial State is in outline as follows :

The actual workshop management and the respon-

sibility for seeing that each workplace contributes its proper quota to the necessary national total will be in the hands of the workers: the co-ordination of workplaces in districts and the concern for generally efficient management will be in the hands of district committees, upon which the managerial and technical sides will be strongly represented: the general concerns of the separate trades, the scientific requirements, the most up-to-date methods, research connected with them, and the skill and knowledge which go to make the trade organisation and technique as perfect as can be, will be looked after by national trade boards upon which all the trade interests will be represented: a central body will be in control of the necessary national supply and will see that the various industrial organisations are working satisfactorily. When the community has advanced so far in nationalisation and control of industry as to be free to fix wages—that is, the share of the producers and service givers in the national product—one of the functions of this central body will be to assign to each industrial group its share in the national product and allow its own Guild or Council to fix the wages of its grades and services. That, in general outline, is the plan upon which the industrial State might organise itself, assigning the various needs and duties to appropriate organisations of the people and interests concerned.

Obviously the Central Economic Council for which this scheme provides is of the greatest importance, and when its duties and possibilities are thought over it may appear to be far too important to be a mere Department of State. I shall return to this in the next chapter, but in the meantime shall try to

indicate what change this conception of industrial organisation will necessitate in the two existing democratic combinations formed by the producers and consumers to protect themselves within the capitalist State.

What is to become of the Trade Union and Co-operative movements should industrial evolution follow these or similar lines?

There will always be work for associations of labour, managers, technicians, but as our Trade Unions change their present functions of being watchdogs against the encroachments of capitalism, or aggressive bodies constantly invading the territory of capitalism in the interests of those they represent, and become organisations through which capitalist control is to be transmuted into social control (acting, of course, with the political State) their activities will change and they will become the associations through which labour will function in the administration of the new industrial State. They will be the links binding workshop with workshop and trade with trade, so their craft\* character may disappear and they may become simply industrial, and watch that organisation and machinery generally do not encroach upon the interest and the liberty of the workman. The managerial and technical associations will perform like functions for their own clientele, but will also be concerned with the further interests of their own efficiency. They will thus take over the work now done by some of the technical institutes—like those of the Civil Engineers or of Applied

\* It is quite possible that craft organisations may survive, because they will be required for the representation of workmen in the separate trades, and it must be remembered that the tactical advantages of forming industrial Unions to fight capitalism will disappear in the Socialist State and a new need will arise for craft organisation.



Chemistry—and keep alive experiment, investigation, initiative. Socialist conditions will be a great stimulus to technical intelligence, and these professional associations will become real institutions for the advancement of applied science, and not mere instruments for securing professional advantages.

The Co-operative movement presents a much more complicated problem. Started in a competitive capitalist society and working in such a society, it has had to develop itself as an industrial State within an alien industrial State. It has therefore had to invade the realms of production, ownership of raw material, transport, and finally banking. The consumer's interest cannot be separated from other interests if it is to be safeguarded. The organisation which begins with the consumer must extend and extend until it controls every activity which enters into production and exchange. The Co-operative purpose under Capitalism cannot be fulfilled by looking after distribution alone.

Therefore, when the community has reached the stage when it must begin to protect itself and its freedom by the organisation of its production, it must absorb into its system the voluntary organisations which have been formed for similar purposes by groups in the capitalist community. What does this mean to the Co-operative movement as we know it?

To discuss this subject in the detail which it deserves would require a separate volume, and in the exploration of the social policy of the Independent Labour Party this ought to be prepared. Here, and for my present purpose, I need only refer to some of the broader facts.

I ought to say to begin with that I reject the idea

that without altering its relation to the political State the Co-operative movement can supplant Capitalism, and, by the engrafting of the administrative ideas of Guild Socialism, can become the great organ of social production, distribution, and exchange for a completely Co-operative community. An application of the conclusions which I have argued out in the chapter on the political proposals of Guild Socialism will explain why I hold this view on principle; whoever studies the conflict between Co-operation and Capitalism and surveys the position of both in the world to-day must see why, as a practical proposal, the Co-operative movement, in spite of its marvellous success, must fail to supersede Capitalism.

In the State which I have in mind an organisation representing consumers is as essential as are organisations for carrying on production. The State should at once use the existing machinery of Co-operation in every way possible for distribution of supplies, and scientific lines of demarcation between municipal trading and Co-operative enterprise should be drawn. The municipality should supply the communal needs—like trams, electricity, and so on—which concern good government, public health, and other matters of communal efficiency; the Co-operative organisation should deal with the more individual needs of consumers. Thus if Co-operation under capitalism has developed in directions which will be barred to it under democratic Socialism, so in like fashion municipal trading has developed under Capitalism on lines which really belong to guilds of consumers. The Co-operative movement should be used for foreign trading relations, and on all industrial committees such as those I have been describing

when distribution, transport, and consumers' interests have to be dealt with, Co-operation should be the organisation recognised.

Thus in the end the Co-operative movement would become what it was intended to be—a function in the industrial State, and its protective outworks of production and transport would be absorbed in the organisations to which they belong. It should be regarded as the basis of the organisation of distribution in the industrial State, and should be transformed accordingly. It will, when complete, be no longer a society of members, but will include all adults in the localities which its stores serve; it will remain democratic in its control, and it will be organised in immediate localities, in districts and nationally, each widening circle having its appropriate duties to perform in the efficient working of the distributive scheme.





## VII.

### THE ECONOMIC COUNCIL.

**S**OCIETY as I see it, and as I think the Independent Labour Party should see it, is a unity with a State organisation of sovereign authority over matters which are the subject of State concern, this State containing within itself a complete industrial system of associations upon which large powers of self-government have been conferred. What are to be the political organs of such a State? Is it to be built up from the industrial organisation or is it to be civic and political throughout? We must again discriminate between two sets of conditions under which the answer may be given—the complete Socialist State and the State in transition. The latter provides the greatest difficulty.

In the Socialist State industrial associations will work smoothly with the political organisation because both will directly serve common interests. Political democracy will not be as it now is very largely—a capitalist dictatorship masked under forms of popular consent, and therefore there will be no conflict between it and the industrial democracy of the labour organisations. There will be no system of private profit intervening between the workman and the community, creating a rivalry of interest between two economic classes which sacrifices to itself the interests of all. The workman will supply the needs of the community, and the industrial organisations being under the control of the workers, the disputes that now lead to strife will either not arise or, if they do,

will not be of a nature to be fought about. The bitter antagonisms between Capital and Labour will have passed away, and with them will have gone industrial war. By far and away the greater part of industrial legislation will cease to be political, and will become rules decided by the industrial organisations alone, and these organisations will also take much work from the judiciary and apply their own rules. This will affect Factory Acts, Workmen's Compensation Acts, unemployment, factory and mines inspection, and so on. Only the conflict between Capital and Labour, when the State must intervene as a third party in supreme authority, imposes such activities on the political State. The industrial work of the political State under Socialism will be largely confined to co-ordinating and registering the rules and decisions of industrial organisations and in providing machinery for arbitrating on their disagreements, and to seeing that the necessary production is forthcoming and equitable distribution secured.

The industrial associations will have the task of production assigned to them, and they will have to give results. How they produce them will be left largely to themselves in ways that I have shown, the political State seeing that the goods are delivered and, though but rarely directly interfering, still never abrogating its final authority or renouncing its right to control if need be. Thus, the change in the economic structure of society under Socialism will enable the political State to hand over the greater part of its industrial legislation and administration to industrial organisations working in conjunction with national councils charged with the duty of maintaining supply.

I have hinted elsewhere\* that the industrial organisations might be represented in a Second Chamber, provided, of course, that such a thing continues to be part of our constitution. I am far from advocating a Second Chamber so that we may have room for functional representation. The functions are a service, not a government. The ideas of government must remain associated with the unity of the community, not with its parts. But if the view is to prevail that a Second Chamber has to be tolerated to assist, or amend, or destroy the work of the popularly elected House, we must consider what should be the idea of representation embodied in such a Chamber. Obviously it cannot remain the representation of a few families looking after their own interests and that of the class which is associated with them and maintaining the political ideas which are congenial to them. Nor can it be manned, as it now largely is, by wealthy, vulgar men whose vanity has sought some distinction by purchasing a title from the political party to which they belong. The very small proportion of men who sit in our House of Lords on account of the services that they themselves have rendered to the State at home and abroad may be excepted.

It is surely plain that whatever justification there may be for a Second Chamber must lie in its representing in some direct way the great economic functions whose interests are so essential to the life of the community. The closer we approach the organisation of the industrial State, the more necessary is it for us to bring the associations of production into direct touch with the Government. It is by no

\* *Parliament and Revolution* pp. 53-55

means an accident, nor a condition of only temporary necessity, that has caused the Soviet Government of Russia to establish an Economic Council which some competent observers predict will by and by displace the Council of People's Commissaries itself. Nor was it an accident that brought the German Economic Council into being. A purely political body elected to deal with the general life of the State is not the body to be directly responsible for industrial matters when these matters assume the importance which they have done in modern Germany, and which they would assume in such a State as I have in mind. The theory of a Second Chamber is that it supplements the general civic character of the popularly elected one by preserving in political power some qualities essential to the prosperity and security of the State which are supposed (rightly or wrongly) to be left out of account in the battles of political parties. Therefore it seems to me that a nation which demands a Second Chamber must now base that Chamber on economic functions, and create a body representing the industrial interests of society, a body to which is delegated the duty of seeing that the whole industrial machine works.

This matter, however, has a very definite and a new importance given to it when we consider the work of the Central Economic Council, with which I have dealt in the last chapter. Such a Council is necessary in an industrial State, and the question is : What status ought it to have?

This body, as a mere Department of State, like a Board of Trade, would be colossal and would have to be divided into sections which themselves would be Departments presided over by men bearing



Ministerial responsibility. No one man could ever hope to represent the whole Department in Parliament or anywhere else. The members serving on it should hold high dignity, and the importance of their responsibilities should be brought home to them in every possible way.

A critic of this suggestion made in "Parliament and Revolution" described it as "more striking than statesmanlike." The importance of industrial organisation in the modern community is, however, likely to make it statesmanlike as well as striking. Evolutionary political change is burdening the State with economic responsibilities for which it has hitherto developed no organisation, and so soon as it begins to make itself responsible for communal supply it must refit its machinery to its task. As I have said, part of that machinery must be a great National Economic Council, and its powers and responsibilities would be such as to suggest for it the status, not of a bureaucracy of experts, but of a representative authority elected from registers of members of the various organisations of producers, consumers and professional bodies with a section appointed by the political Chamber, consisting either of its own members or of persons chosen by it to represent it. For purposes of election, the various producing and consuming organisations might be grouped and a system of proportional representation adopted for the election of candidates.

The constitutional powers of such a Council would secure to it the right of initiation for all industrial legislation, which, however, would require the assent of the political Chamber before it became law, but the Council would not have to assent to the political

work of the other Chamber. There would be one sovereign political authority.

This is neither the time nor the place to suggest the details of such a constitution, but I may remind my readers that the chief problem arising out of it—differentiation of function—is already contained in the relations between the House of Lords and the House of Commons, especially as regards Finance and Supply, and the settlement of disagreements on Bills. If the electors were not simply divided into trades, but into grouped trades, their representatives might be encouraged to take wide views of their interests, and a Council composed of representatives of all the service-giving classes, both as producers and users, would maintain in its discussions and decisions social and not particularist views. By withholding from the Council political authority we should secure to it a character quite distinct from the other Chamber, and so avoid overlapping and friction. In time, the decisions of this body would be accepted without much discussion by the other, but that must be left to experience. In any event, this would be a most effective method of devolution and would adapt our constitution to the nature and the needs of the State. It would be Democracy functioning through its institutions in the way it functions in the lives of the people. The scheme would embody all that is true in the proposals of the functional school, but would avoid its errors by maintaining the unity of society and superimposing it upon economic groups.

It is sometimes contended that when these associations of the workshop, the trade, and the consumer once get going, nothing will be left for the political State to do. That is not so. They will exercise

powers delegated to them by the political State which will register their decrees and watch their work. The political State, moreover, will be the authority in the background responsible for the smooth working of the whole organisation, and the politics of supply must remain the concern of the State.

I deny, moreover, that industry and economics are the sole concerns of the community. The life of peoples when their material well-being is secured and when their liberty from economic serfdom is made good, gives rise to much social co-operation of other than of a purely voluntary character. Efficient economic organisation is only the condition of an active social life of moral quality, of culture, of enlightenment, in which the whole community unitedly has a part to play. I deny the materialist basis of social life; an economic council can never cover the whole of the political concerns of the community; the "administration of things" can never be the end of government. Upon that fundamental fact I take my stand when considering how these two organisations are to work.

Foreign relations and Imperial affairs (even if the Empire becomes a federation of self-governing States) will remain important not merely in their economic but human aspects; taxation must be largely a national concern; education can never become purely local, nor can public health, nor can the more general rules and laws of social relationship. Parliament will not only remain the supreme political authority in the nation from which all the economic organisations will derive their authority and to which their accounts must be rendered, but it will continue to have plenty of work to do of a nature which none of the other

authorities can perform. The life of the State will expand. A community freed from material bondage will find many activities upon which to embark.

To speculate upon the probable development in the relations between the economic organisations and Parliament is enticing, especially as it is possible to see in them the same relationship as once existed between the monarchy and the House of Commons.

As I have stated, some people think that there is bound to be a conflict between the People's Commissaries and the Economic Council in Russia, and that in Germany the Economic Council and the Reichstag will clash in time. In the conflict between our own monarchy and the House of Commons the spender of money was worsted by the provider; were there to be a conflict between the political and economic powers in the State it would be between the spenders and the producers—almost the same problem in a new form. But what would really happen if the Economic Councils won? Obviously the non-industrial functions of the State would have to be performed by the victorious organisations, in which case the industrial authorities would have added general political work to their functions; or the industrial organisations would continue their own work, in which they will be sovereign, leaving the civic political work to be done by bodies of less importance and distinction.

Either course would be undesirable and unsatisfactory. Policy should be directed to maintaining the national political body as the supreme authority; industrial associations with large powers of self-administration should be set up as differentiated organs of the political State. Wherever sovereignty



rests it must be where the civic mind operates, and not where the citizen acts in one of his aspects, however important.

The conflict, however, is really not inevitable, because the two organisations can perform their functions in harmony. The Civil War was a conflict between classes, not within the same class in two of its functioning aspects. The opposition between the Russian People's Commissaries and the Economic Council will come, if it comes at all, because as a matter of fact under the present undemocratic form of Russian government two authorities, elected differently, are in rivalry for the supreme power; if the conflict comes in Germany, it will be because the Reichstag represents a different thing from the Economic Council, and not merely a different aspect of the same community. Obviously, the latter conflict will only mature if the political body represents different interests from the economic one, if the working of German democracy sends to the Reichstag a majority different in kind from that sent to the Economic Council, if the two bodies represent a war of class interest.

Those who are most confident in Germany that the Economic Council will supersede the Reichstag are those who wish to change the former into a kind of Labour Soviet, elected on a Soviet franchise to challenge definitely political democracy. In the nature of things there is no law by which a community cannot be represented in two institutions—one concerning itself with industrial affairs and the other representing general civic policy. If within the community the conflict between economic interests and political democracy is laid to rest, the two sides organised for legislative and administrative purposes will co-operate and not strive with each other.



## VIII.

### TOWARDS DEMOCRACY.

**A**S I draw to the conclusion of this study I return to the admission and the thought with which I began it. It is true that a body representing the citizenship of the whole nation must be concerned with so many things that it can respond but slowly to the affairs, even when pressing, of the industrial community, and it must in ordinary times be somewhat remote from the day to day interests of the man in the street. It is charged with so much that it can do nothing swiftly and well. Its business must therefore tend to lose interest; it must ever be liable to be controlled by manipulators fighting sham battles and to develop rules of discussion which mean that contests in it are conducted not upon affairs of real importance but of partisanship and of party management; its elections must tend to deteriorate until they become appeals to a crowd that is but little interested or instructed in the real issues; it must always be watched and threatened by outside movements arising out of its neglect or its faults. The complexity of Parliamentary work is a menace to democracy as a system, and to Parliament as an institution. Hence arises the attack upon democracy and Parliament which has become prevalent to-day. I have indicated how industrial administration can be carried on in accordance with the principles of an organic Socialism, and how industrial self-administration can be secured without a dissolution

of the organic unity of political society through its institutions. I retain the Parliamentary idea and the Parliamentary institution, and I have now to consider how it can be protected against the deterioration to which I have referred and which I have admitted. The question we have to answer to-day is no less than this : Is democracy played out ?

The satisfactory working of Parliament undoubtedly presupposes a keen political intelligence on the part of such a large number of electors as to influence the conduct of elections and the work of the Parliamentary sections. At bottom, the view of those who would supplant civic institutions by industrial ones is that the civic unity is so many sided that it cannot be represented and that intelligence cannot become good enough to make political democracy in its fullest meaning successful. Socialists, at any rate Socialists of the Independent Labour Party school, must reject these assumptions, and that for two reasons. In the first place they are untrue in themselves, and in the second place, when made the reasons for the creation of new political systems, they end, as I have shown, in confusion and futility. The industrial organisation should only be administrative, and when a system of administration has been created to meet the requirements of the producing groups and to secure for them liberty and self-control within their proper spheres, nothing more ought to be done in that direction.

But how are we to meet the admitted fact that the complexity of Parliamentary representation makes not only Parliament itself ineffective but democracy a mere tool of a capitalist dictatorship or a mere plaything in the hands of demagogues and party managers ? What we hear is that the ordinary elector cannot



protect himself against his political enemies, and that, strive as we may, he is taken in in the end. Up to now that is true, but the argument amounts to no more than this : that democrats are not yet intelligent enough to run a democracy. Let us note the force of this. If the lack of intelligence will not allow the existence of self-government, but turns it into a capitalist dictatorship, what hope is there for any form of free government? All our ideals are wrong; all our aims are false. Obedience and authority become the inevitable condition of government. Socialists must reject such a conclusion *sans phrase*. They must proceed to deal with intelligence. They can have no art or part with those who, whether inspired by reaction or revolution, regard democracy with the Olympian airs of the superior being or the *blasé* yawn of the disillusioned one. This anti-democratic pose, whatever its motive, belongs to reaction, not to progress. The "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" as used in Russia, though not as used by Marx, is far more akin to the spirit of old-fashioned English Toryism with the House of Lords as its citadel than it is to popular government.

The Socialist State can have no foundation but intelligence, which is the only reliable power in society. The biologist may explain how and why the crowd is moved by instinct : our problem is to strengthen intelligence in that crowd and weaken the conditions and diminish the opportunities which make instinctive feelings arbitrary motives. The analytical critic may expose the self-regarding motives of groups and functions and compel us to face the fact that group and class interests war against each other and the community : our problem is to create by strenuous

propaganda the higher and truer conception of a social unity which in a well-ordered society would embrace in harmonious working all those rivalries, and to devise our programmes with that unity in view. The society we would create is not a patchwork of the existing one, but one which corresponds to ideal conceptions.

We must therefore give a strenuous backing to all truly educational work. We must not countenance in that work the patronage of old institutions whose spirit is alien to that of the real world in which we live, and which are now only taking an interest in us because we are taking an interest in ourselves. I must not, when writing this necessary warning, be understood to propose the rejection of all aid from such institutions. Much of their work makes directly for the creation of snobs and feeble-minded readers of a book or two. During a good many years of activity in those parts of the Labour movement where handfuls of active men have given policies to majorities and fought successfully against old ideas, I have watched the work and the power of the men who have gone to these wells for refreshment and I have seen ability destroyed, strength weakened, and ambition become content with crowns of tinsel. We must go through that. A class on pilgrimage is always beset on the wayside by the keepers of gaudy stalls; the weak ones and some of the strong ones succumb, but the march goes on. Our watchword is "Educate"—the right education, the education that makes independent minds, not servile and imitative ones.

We must extend the activities of discussion; we must raise discussion from being the engagement of armies to being the exploration of truth seekers. I

believe that in America there is some organised movement for this. Socialists must be foremost amongst those promoting such things here. In adult education, the key-word is self-teaching—self-teaching by contact, not by textbooks—the development of the adult mind, not in relation to some world outside itself, but in relation to its own world. A robust mental independence, a capacity to reflect from the standpoint of one's own fireside and experience, a power to respect one's people, one's self, and one's own life—that is education. Intelligence is the only dictator who can justify himself—a robust intelligence; and in these days when people are just beginning to be aware of this, when young workmen crowd for knowledge, unfortunately much that is offered them in response to their application is to do them evil rather than good. This cannot be emphasised too much, for to create intelligence is the necessary preparation for Socialist success.

Given, then, the intelligent citizen, how is his political State to be organised so as to keep him in touch with it and draw from him intelligent judgments upon it? Can we remedy it, so that Parliament ceases to be vague, ceases to be the sport of demagogues, ceases to be the creation of a non-political crowd? It is largely a problem in contact. At what points does the individual life come into contact with the organisations of his complex communal life? I have dealt with the industrial side. What of the political side? Through the workshop, through the district, through the shop committee, the trade branch, the guild, the workman gets his contact with the national economic bodies. Through what has he to re-establish his broken contact with Parliament?

The individual's first and most intimate contact is with his family. Hence, I believe that everything which takes from the family its essential responsibilities has an evil effect both upon the individual and the community. Let us establish families on an independent economic and moral foundation, let the father and mother be the heads of the little State of the home, with an income equal to its needs, with a life in accordance with its nature, with an experience which roots for ever the minds of its people in reality and companionship and the co-operation of duty, and we shall have laid the foundations of a great State, because we have enabled the individual to find himself. Capitalism has gone far to destroy the family, and with it society. It has forced us to create great general institutions, supported by charity like hospitals, staffed by officials or quasi-parents like public schools, to perform the functions of the family. It has removed religious instruction from the fireside to the classroom. By destroying the nurturing ground of individuality it has destroyed individuality itself. The child's character, in its fruitful beginnings, is fed from personality, and the invigorating contact with personality must be close. The biographies of those whose lives are worth recording invariably open with the influence of a parent; the influence of the stranger comes later, and is engrafted on the stem of the first. The influence of tradition, of institutions, of one's historical surroundings, of one's nation, comes still later, to finish what has already begun.

The Socialist, with his eye upon immediate human need, and finding no protection from capitalist devastation except in the public purse and the public institution, makes his proposals accordingly. He is



wrong in doing this, if in the meantime he neglects the rebuilding of the family unity and independence. He must do both, and as he succeeds in the latter he must abandon parts of his ameliorative programme and place them where they ought to be, on the family. We ought not to wish for higher wages in order to allow higher savings or more unprofitable expenditure, but to increase the independence of the family within its own proper sphere. Thus, and only thus, will mere possession be translated into improved human qualities.

The next system of contact which an individual makes is his town or village, and the problem of the Socialist is to make this again a real civic unity, to make its government something important, something in which the individual feels concern. This means, on the mechanical side, that the powers of local self-government must be greatly enhanced. Far greater freedom must be given to local authorities; the red tape which binds them to a Whitehall bureaucracy must be cut. Local governing bodies should be given liberty to develop themselves, and powers now granted them by legislation, or which they can exercise only with Whitehall sanction, must be given to them absolutely. The provision of education, within certain national limits prescribed by Parliament, should be their responsibility, and no uniform system should be imposed; control of such interests as land and housing should be in their hands, and they should have power to supply collectively what they desire. A judiciary power should also be restored to these unities, so that their completeness may be easily felt and their responsibilities may commend them to the regard of their people. In a sentence, they should

organise their local life in accordance with the intelligence of the local unity, and no obstacle should be put in their way.

Thus the sense and the responsibility of citizenship on a scale which the citizen can comprehend will be developed. He will understand what it is to belong to a community, and if education enables him to grasp that community in its historical sense, if his neighbourhood appeals to him as being rich in tradition and in men, he will understand the secret of living in community and of devoting himself to his community. The local government unit must be a real and a big thing, something in which the citizen can take an interest and a pride. The first organised unit of government with which the citizen comes in contact should fulfil two conditions: it should be so important as to be held in esteem, and it should be so close up to him that he can grasp its work with his mind.

Between this and the sense of nationality there are intermediate communities of which the county is the chief. The government of this should be equally freed from a paralysing central bureaucracy. Power over land, education, and industry should be adequate to maintain a county status, and the judicial authority of counties should be extensive.

My purpose is plain, I hope. It is to form a community within the community, as against a function within the community. As in the national organisation the two aspects of democracy, the political and the industrial, are separately organised, so in the areas of local government the same differentiation would take place and the same types of organisation be found. The plan would be complete

from workshop to National Economic Council, from village meeting to Parliament.

But the community idea must be the dominant note; the thought must be the co-operation of citizens, not of workmen nor of consumers. And I would put in a plea that in local government areas historical tradition may not be wholly sacrificed to economic convenience. Tradition is the only inheritance which men need care about. It alone links up the generations so that no good thing ceases to live. We see how the makers of the Paris patched-up Peace rode roughshod over that, and we also see some of the consequences already. Historical soil is the best for nurturing purposes. This may mean a little inconvenience with gas, water, trams, electric power, but these matters can be arranged. In any event, the last word upon it to me is this: A Yorkshireman may be a citizen of an imperfect economic area, but he has a chance of saving his soul, whereas if he were born in "Economic Area No. 3" he would probably be doomed from his birth, and an Economic Council would be all that his life would ask for. He would be of the earth earthy.

The merely bureaucratic and materialist Socialist of the Fabian and Economic schools accepts the hard, grey, mechanical world, impoverished by capitalism, and would organise it. He would take the industrial unit of the workshop as the primary unit of his State. But the Independent Labour Party should stand for the living units of personality working in association with other full personalities. The world we desire is not achieved by the removal of differences and the creation of featureless things, either as men or communities. Families with individuality, villages

and towns with individuality, counties with individuality, nations with individuality—from these comes the grand humanity. We detest Capitalism because it has brought all life and all communities down to machine levels, to standard sizes, to featureless averages. Its conception of union is sameness; its conception of efficiency is averages. It cannot afford to nurture traditions; when it preserves tradition, it vulgarises it for its own personal adornment. The Socialist must move on totally different lines. By enlivening democracy and enriching it right through in widening group after widening group, he invigorates the life of the widest of all the groups—the nation and humanity. Upon this plan we can give Parliament a definiteness and a meaning; we can make it a democratic reality; we can invigorate democratic intelligence and interest until the national representative body is chosen by reflecting citizens, is composed of men with a genius and a character fitting to their work, and is really a mirror of the national will.

This is the true case for what is called “devolution” in our current political vocabularies. Devolution is advocated to-day in order to relieve the Imperial Parliament of work which it cannot perform and to make legislation a more accurate reflection of the common will. It is part of a nationalist claim for liberty. That is but a small part of the case. Devolution is required in order that the citizen may keep in touch with his Government and may feel, through a gradation of widening groups, an identity with his Government. Each sphere of political contact has to be organised and endowed with appropriate powers; if any one be neglected the whole system



is like a broken nervous system, and suffers from paralysis.

Great Britain is a meaningless term except for geographical purposes. Pressed to do service for political purposes, with its constituent groups suppressed, it may give to us a government of federated groups of producers, or a police government, or a government voted into office by mad or confused people, or by a people moved by silly stunts, but not a government of sane, politically conscious citizens. The Scottish Briton or the Welsh Briton requires Scotland and Wales through which to function. When he is policed or "educated" out of his political individuality, he becomes a mere lifeless Briton from whom have escaped the finer sentiments and the soul and who has become possessed by such ideas as geographical extension, industrial and materialist prosperity, military might—the amalgamation of those appetites of possession and authority known as Imperialism. A people becomes Imperialist by the sacrifice of the qualities that alone enable it to fulfil its Imperial responsibilities. If an Imperial nation is one of great, inspiring, and guiding influence, the most magnificent of such have been small States. We find the greatest Imperial statesmen and administrators in times before we had conceptions of empire.

Devolution is therefore required to re-establish the social contacts which men make in communities—the town, the county, the nation, with its distinctive traditions, its culture, its soul and, consequently, its governing genius. What have we not lost by diverting Scottish education, Scottish conceptions of land ownership and holding, Scottish literature, Scottish society, because Scottish nationality has been sunk in the

political organisation of British nationality, a nationality as artificial as Esperanto or Urdu vocabularies? The same is true of Wales and of Ireland. And the devastation has been made more complete by the destruction or suppression of true local government. At the root of it all is Capitalism with its fatal allurements of materialist gains and organisation for materialist efficiency.

The Socialist political State, sub-divided into a gradation of organisations determined by the various historical contacts which the individual makes in expanding his self from his fireside over the whole world until he finds himself at rest in the all-comprehending unity of humanity, is a State of vigilant and intelligent democracy, a State every grade of which will be guided by the opinion, the criticism and the ideals of citizens conscious of their responsibility to play a part in the life of the whole.

Such is the idea which the Socialist should place in rivalry to the pluralists in sovereignty and materialists in administration who would construct the organisation of society from industrial functions. The region is a unity of life, the workshop is only a unity of economic function. Representation must overcome the difficulties of complex interests, but the way to do that is not to simplify the complexities until they cease to be real, but to simplify them into their containing unities, taking care all the time that the simplified unity is still social and not merely a functional part of the social unity. The citizen finds it difficult to express himself in terms of his full citizenship, but the problem must not be given up : it can be solved by allowing him to function effectively in natural groups of ever-widening complexity. We must

cling to citizenship in these days of revolutionary turmoil and of materialist aims as an outcast on a stormy sea clings to the spar upon which his chances of life depend. The sub-divisions of the State must, each in itself, contain in embryo the State in full, and the mind that is working in it must be the same mind throughout. Voluntary association and industrial combination ought to fructify in the life of the community, but can claim no authority in the State except through the organisation of citizens.









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